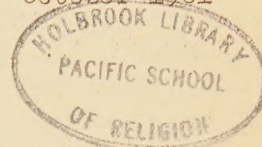


No. 7

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THE POTTER'S HOUSE

Like many people both in and out of Washington D.C., I met the Church of the Saviour in the Potter's House, that is to say in a coffee house.

The Potter's House is a coffee house indeed. The Church of the Saviour bought the building (at a considerable financial sacrifice), extended it, decorated it beautifully and now runs it as a coffee house. Every night twelve to fifteen members of the church work there as counter-hands and waiters offering delicious coffee, tea, sandwiches, pastries, cheeses and ice creams. One hour before opening, the group meets for Bible study, meditation and prayer. Then they serve. People come because they know exactly who is going to serve them: men and women who can answer their questions and help them in their spiritual needs. They know also that they are going to a place where "shalom" is lived - "shalom" (as it has been said in the Department on Evangelism for years) meaning wholeness, the fruit of salvation, salvation.

This Monthly Letter wants to inform you about this remarkable experiment conducted by a small congregation of 68 members. N. Gordon Cosby, the leading minister of the church, offered me the church's help in publication and I suggested that the Church of the Saviour should provide the readers of the Monthly Letter with its own fine folder on the Potter's House. It is enclosed. There is also another small folder which gives some more information about the possibilities such an experiment has, if it has been courageously begun. For this help the Department on Evangelism is most grateful.

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The Church of the Saviour wants to be just a church, but - or better therefore - is an outstanding church. It calls itself "an ecumenical church". To introduce this church I may quote from its own documents:

"An ecumenical church is one whose heart is heavy because of a divided Christendom. It will pray and work for the healing of its divisions. Its only weapon is love. It will at all times consciously feel itself a part of the World Church and give its first loyalty

to the world Christian fellowship. It will be open minded and sympathetic. This is different from tolerance. This spirit is born, not of indifference, but of deep conviction. An ecumenical church gives unqualified corporate allegiance to Jesus Christ."

"In the beginning of the Christian Church, all members were ministers. Each was an evangelist, a witness to the power of Christ and his resurrection.. There were no passive, no 'nominal' members. The most humble had his necessary part. So in the Church of the Saviour. Every member is as responsible as the congregation's pastor for the spiritual welfare of the fellowship. Every member is as truly ordained to his Christian vocation. This is, at present, a church with 68 ministers! Some, it is true, are still in training, but all acknowledge the call."

"Experience at the Church of the Saviour indicates that true Christian fellowship is possible only in small groups. In a small group of persons wholly committed to Christ it may be possible, through the Holy Spirit, to recapture the vision and power of the little band that centered around Jesus. That group was a fellowship, save for its Leader, of ordinary, weak, fallible men.. In the years that followed the founding (of the Church of the Saviour), members formed fellowship groups, each composed of from six to twelve persons. Various groupings have been explored, with emphasis first on deepening of the spiritual life through prayer and study, then on dynamic Christian action. At present the emphasis is upon an awareness of mission. There are now seven mission groups, each dedicated to a specific line of Christian action. Prayer and study have an even larger place in the lives of the members than formerly, in the groups, but are now more directly channeled into areas of service.. Occupationally, the groups are largely made up of business and professional persons - salesmen, teachers, lawyers, a journalist, an editor, an architect, and government employees of various sorts. Although there are relatively few manual laborers, there is enough diversity to constitute one of the Church of the Saviour's richest blessings. Those who, in the world, never would have met, here discover in each other deep belongings in Christ."

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I wish I could give some more information, but time and budget allow just these brief introductory remarks. Perhaps you may want to ask the Church of the Saviour directly for some more material (2025 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington 6, D.C., U.S.A.); or you may write to the Department on Evangelism, asking for more information in a second Monthly Letter on this experiment.

Hans Jochen Margull